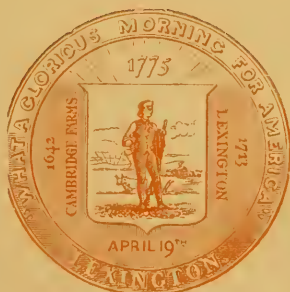


1775 — APRIL NINETEENTH — 1896

❁ ❁ An Address Commemorative of the  
Life and Services of George D. Robinson,  
Governor of the Commonwealth, 1884-86,  
by Henry Cabot Lodge

Proceedings at the Hancock Church in Lex-  
ington on the One Hundred and Twenty-  
first Anniversary of the Battle



[PUBLISHED BY THE TOWN]

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COMMITTEE FOR 1896 ON THE OBSERVANCE OF THE  
NINETEENTH OF APRIL.

---

HERBERT G. LOCKE, *Chairman*.

Rev. J. B. WERNER, *Secretary*.

GEORGE E. MUZZEY.

GEORGE O. DAVIS.

Dr. N. H. MERRIAM.

EDWARD T. HARRINGTON.

GEORGE O. SMITH.

GEORGE S. JACKSON.

FRANK C. CHILDS.

ROBERT P. CLAPP.

MARY HUDSON.

Mrs. FRANK C. CHILDS.

Mrs. LUCY M. WHITING.

Mrs. EDWARD T. HARRINGTON.

Mrs. JOHN H. WILLARD.

[The observance of the anniversary was marked also by various proceedings on Monday, April 20, the exercises recorded in these pages being held on Sunday, April 19.]

## ORDER OF EXERCISES

AT THE HANCOCK CHURCH, LEXINGTON, ON APRIL 19, 1896, THE 121ST  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON.

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1. VOLUNTARY . . . . . Mr. HOWARD M. DOW
2. ANTHEM. "Heavenly Father,"  
Herbert Johnson's Quintette Club and Mr. J. L. White.
3. PRAYER . . . . . Rev. CARLTON A. STAPLES
4. SOLO. "Rock of Ages," . . . . . Mr. HERBERT JOHNSON
5. ADDRESS OF WELCOME . . . . . Mr. ROBERT P. CLAPP  
Pres't of Lexington Hist'l Soc'y
6. QUINTETTE. "Lift thine Eyes," . . . . . QUINTETTE CLUB
7. ADDRESS . . . . . Hon. HENRY CABOT LODGE
8. QUINTETTE. "I'm a Pilgrim," . . . . . QUINTETTE CLUB
9. HYMN. "America," . . . . . CONGREGATION
10. BENEDICTION.



## ADDRESS OF WELCOME.

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Before introducing Mr. Lodge to deliver the address in special commemoration of Governor Robinson, a son of Lexington, Mr. Clapp spoke as follows :—

*Fellow-citizens, Ladies and Gentlemen,*—As President of the Society under whose auspices the annual observance of this day by the town is directed, it is my pleasant duty to invite you to review once more the lessons in loyalty and unselfish devotion to country which the Nineteenth of April teaches, and to thank the distinguished guests here to-day for the honor of their presence.

The wealth of historical treasure with which Lexington is endowed, though held dearest by her citizens themselves, is the glory and inspiration of Massachusetts as well,—yes, of our whole country. And so it is fitting that the acting Governor of the Commonwealth, and a Senator from Massachusetts prominent in the counsels of the nation, should be here gratefully to lay a tribute of respect on the graves of the patriots of 1775, and to reverence a conspicuous example of manhood which the fruits of their services have given to the generation of to-day.

To our guests I may be permitted to say that in coming to pay their homage at Liberty's shrine they follow in the footsteps of distinguished predecessors. There are yet living in

this community those who saw escorted to the Common, beneath an arch of evergreen erected by the townspeople as a symbol of his memory, that devoted friend of America, the liberty-loving Lafayette. In 1852 Jonathan Harrington, two years before he died as the last survivor of the battle, standing at the age of ninety-three upon the historic spot, received, warm with the pulses of patriotic fervor, the hand of Louis Kossuth. Passing in front of this church, you will observe on the site of the old meeting-house at the end of the Common a shapely elm, which was planted twenty-one years ago to-day by General Grant. And, reverting to an earlier event which adds to the memories of the day, we recall April 19, fifty-one years ago, when the bones of the eight martyr patriots, whose blood first consecrated the soil, were removed with impressive ceremonial to their present resting-place on the Common. Upon that occasion the scholarly and finished Everett, silver-tongued and impassioned, was the orator of the day. But, sir [to Mr. Lodge], while we remind you that he is a predecessor in title to the position you occupy here to-day, we feel sure that you will hold to the same high standard of eloquence, and stir within us the same elevated strain of patriotism. He sang of arms and the men who bore them; but in the character of the man whose career, honoring his native town and promoting the welfare of the State, illustrated the results of their work, you have a no less worthy theme of song.

We cherish with loving pride the Nineteenth of April, not because of any prominence which the annual observance attracts to Lexington as a town, but because we recognize the importance of the occasion as a factor in the enriching of life and character. Stevenson, writing of the great English admirals, says, "These stories of her sea captains, printed, so to speak, in capitals, and full of moral influence, are more valu-

able to England than any material benefit in all the books of political economy between Westminster and Birmingham." So we hold that the stories of Lexington, Concord, Valley Forge, and Saratoga, of "Old Ironsides," of Gettysburg, and Chickamauga, are worth more to the United States than the products of her mines or the fruits of her inventions; for in them are found the influences that make for honor and manhood.

Parker's band of fifty undisciplined men, standing almost in mock defiance before a body of eight hundred tried veterans, and returning the fire of the king's troops, presents no pleasing sight, so foolhardy seems the act. But the fire returned, the patriots dead, and we behold an eloquent performance. Its memory serves a useful purpose, not only to those whose profession it is to bear arms in the country's service, but to the humblest individual in civil life. All men are idealists at heart; and the patient toil and suffering which the fathers endured, the heroic deeds which they performed, touch in us a vein of the poetic. We love to recall the examples of their lives; for they send us back to our daily toil with good cheer, and even inspire a hope that in some manner we may become heroes also.

While we stand ready to respond, with arms if need be, to the calls which the country's honor may make upon us, let us hope that the national character may never need to be toned and invigorated by the chastening influences which accompany the awful brutalities of war, but that it may be preserved and strengthened by the inspiring lessons with which American history is illumined.

It was your singular good fortune, fellow-citizens, two years ago to-day, to hear from this very platform the voices of two men of Massachusetts,—George D. Robinson and Frederick T. Greenhalge,—now passed beyond, whose useful lives and

services are appropriately made the subject of commemorative addresses in connection with this Patriots' Day. They found in the manifold problems of civil life opportunities to establish high ideals of service, to exhibit the enduring virtues of independence and courage, and to exemplify those lines of Lowell:

"Life may be given in many ways,  
And loyalty to truth be sealed  
As bravely in the closet as the field,  
So bountiful is fate."

## MR. LODGE'S ADDRESS.

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Yesterday we had a memorial service in Boston for our Governor, who had died in office. To-day we meet to do like honor to one of his near predecessors. The quick succession of these solemn observances is a sad reminder of the loss which has within a few months befallen the Commonwealth in the sudden death of two of her most trusted and eminent public men. Both deserved well of the Republic, both had done the State high service, both had lived lives and shown qualities which were an honor to Massachusetts.

He whose memory we would recall, and whose life and deeds we would praise here to-day, had withdrawn himself some years ago from the public career in which he had played such a distinguished part. He had returned to the active and successful pursuit of his profession, where he held a deservedly high position. He was cut down suddenly in the fulness of his strength, both of body and mind; and the news of his death brought deep sorrow to all the people of the State. His loss was as keenly felt as if he had still held office; for, although he had retired from public life, the services he had rendered, his high reputation, and his strong character made him in any sphere or in any field of human activity a potent influence and a pillar of strength to the community in which he lived.

There is a peculiar fitness in coming here on this day to honor his memory. Not only is this the town of his birth, but it is a famous and historic spot. Lexington is a name known to all Americans. When we tell the story of the long, brave struggle which made us an independent nation, we begin it here where the minute-men faced the soldiers of England for the first time in arms. With it are entwined all the memories of the Revolution. It was to Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill that Daniel Webster pointed first when he numbered the glories of Massachusetts. Here the memories dearest to our hearts awaken, and they are all American. They speak of American liberty, American courage, American union and independence. There is no jarring note anywhere. Hence the peculiar fitness of which I have spoken in our coming here to commemorate the life and services of Governor Robinson; for he was not only a distinguished man, but he was a typical one.

He was a true son of the soil, an American, a New Englander. Here the Puritans settled, here they lived for generations, here their descendants fought the first fight of the Revolution; and here, if anywhere, in this historic American town we can learn from the life of one of its children what the result has been of the beliefs, the strivings, the traditions, of the people who founded and built up New England, and in the course of the centuries have pushed their way across the continent. In the career and the character of Governor

Robinson we have an open book, where we can read a story which will tell us what kind of man the civilization of the English Puritans has been able to produce in this nineteenth century, after so many years of growth and battle in the New World. Has the result been worthy of the effort and the struggle? Has the race advanced and grown stronger here under new influences in its two hundred and fifty years of American existence, or has it faltered, failed, and declined? These are questions of deep moment to us, children of New England and Massachusetts. Let us turn to the life of the man whose memory brings us here to-day, and find the answer there.

One of the earliest of the Puritan settlements was at Cambridge; and there a town sprang up with its church and school-house, and in a short time with the little college which has grown since to the great university we know to-day. As the years went by, more and more land was taken up; and a new settlement was formed to the north of the college town, and known as Cambridge Farms. Thither about 1706 came Jonathan Robinson with his young wife, Ruth. He was born in 1682, the son of William Robinson, of Cambridge, was a weaver by trade, and moved from his birthplace that he might get a farm and establish a home for his family. He became one of the leading men of the little settlement, was chosen a tythingman in 1735, and in 1744 was one of the committee appointed to "dignify and seat ye meeting-house," an important social function in the early days of New England.



He had six children. The eldest, Jonathan, born in 1707, married in his turn, and had a son named Jacob, born in 1739. His son, also named Jacob, the great-grandson of the Cambridge weaver, was born in 1762. He lived to a great age, and was in his turn a leader in the town, being selectman in 1805 and 1806, and for several years assessor. He had nine children, among them Hannah, who became the wife of Charles Tufts, the founder of Tufts College, and Charles, who was the father of George D. Robinson, the future governor, born Jan. 20, 1834. The mother of Governor Robinson was Mary Davis, of Concord, a lineal descendant of Dolor Davis, one of the earliest of the Plymouth settlers, and the ancestor of three Massachusetts Governors. The mother of Mrs. Robinson was the daughter of Joseph Hosmer, who acted as adjutant in the fight at Concord Bridge.

I have traced this pedigree in some detail, not because it is remarkable, but because it is typical. It is characteristic of New England, and represents the rank and file—the yeomanry of Massachusetts—who have made the State and done so much to build the nation. How plainly they come before us,—these men and women of the unmixed Puritan stock! They were a simple, hard-working folk, tilling the ground, weaving their linen, bringing up their children in the fear of God, governing themselves, filling in their turn the town offices; while they never lost their hold on higher things, respecting and seeking education, deeply religious, and with an abiding love of home



and country. One of the Robinson name was in Captain Parker's company on the 19th of April at Lexington, and on the mother's side we find one of the officers at Concord. These Puritans came here to hear a sermon after their own fashion. They were stern and often intolerant, but always strong, determined men. As the generations passed, each doing its simple duty in thorough manner, the Puritan severity softened and mellowed; but the great qualities of the race remained unchanged, and never failed in war or peace.

From such ancestry did George Robinson come, and such were the traditions he inherited. His father was a farmer, a man respected in the town, of which he was many times selectman. The boy was brought up to the hard but vigorous life of a New England country town. His father's farm lay some two miles to the north of Lexington, in what was then a somewhat secluded spot. Here the boy soon began to bear his share of the responsibilities, and help in the support of the family. There was a great deal of hard work on the farm, few leisure hours, not many books to read, and, as the nearest neighbor was nearly half a mile away, not much society. But among the New Englanders, as among the lowland Scotch, the two branches of the English-speaking race which have perhaps contended with harder conditions than any others, there was an ardent love of learning and a belief in the power and the value of education, for which no sacrifice was deemed too great.

So, while George Robinson helped his father on the

farm, he managed to attend the district school for three or four months in the year. He did well at school, and one who knew him all his life says of him: "What he was as a man, he was as a boy,—truthful, sincere, kind, and clean,—a boy whom every one respected and esteemed, making friends wherever he went." The means at the command of his family were so slender that he put aside the idea of ever getting to college; but, toward the close of his career in the more advanced schools, his teachers, who had a high opinion of his capacity, persuaded him to take the Harvard examinations. He passed successfully, and entered college in 1852. It was a hard struggle, and required many sacrifices. He went back and forth every day from his home in Lexington to his recitations in Cambridge. He lived on a pittance, earned money by teaching school, and by his rigid economy and self-denial completed his college course, and was graduated with his class in 1856. He took good rank at Harvard, graduating high enough to win a place in the Phi Beta Kappa. He was popular in his class, and a member of several societies. One of his classmates, Judge Smith, says of him: "Whatever he undertook, he did well and so thoroughly that he did not have to go over it a second time. I should say that he never hurried, and yet was always upon time. I do not believe he ever lost any time or strength in worrying. He did his best, and then calmly awaited results."

Thus he found himself face to face with the world at the age of twenty-two, with no capital except his

education, his good brains, and his determined will. His plan at that time seems to have been to study medicine; but, for immediate support, he took to teaching, obtaining a position as principal of the Chicopee High School, where he remained for nine years. During this period he seems to have kept up his studies of medicine. Meantime, on Nov. 24, 1859, he had married; but in 1864 his wife died, and he soon after returned to his father's house, bringing with him his only child, a boy of four years. It was at this time that he changed his plans, and began the serious study of the law in the office of his brother. In 1866 he was admitted to the bar, ten years after his graduation. He was thirty-two years of age, and had come very late to the opening of his professional career. Once started, however, he made rapid progress. He returned to Chicopee, and opened an office in Cabot Hall Block on Market Square, a place which he retained until his comparatively recent removal to Springfield. The thoroughness and painstaking care with which he prepared his cases soon brought him a lucrative practice in a community where he was already so well known and so favorably regarded. Soon after he had established himself in his profession, on July 11, 1867, he again married, his second wife being the daughter of Joseph F. Simonds, of Lexington.

He had always taken an interest in all public questions; but, as he had been late in coming to the bar, so he was slow in engaging in active politics. His public career began with his election to the lower

branch of the legislature from Chicopee in the fall of 1874. He was at that time forty years of age, and accepted the office with genuine reluctance. In his one year of service in the House he was placed on the Judiciary Committee, serving side by side on that committee with Richard Olney, Chief Justice Mason of the Superior Court, the late William W. Rice, John Quincy Adams, and Congressman William S. Knox. The next year he went to the State Senate, where he served one term as in the lower branch. During his two years of experience in the State legislature he quickly took high rank as a debater, and showed qualifications for public life which marked him for higher honors. They were not long in coming. In the fall of 1876 he was nominated as the Republican candidate for Congress in the old Eleventh District, so long and ably represented by Henry L. Dawes, which two years before had been carried by Chester W. Chapin, the Democratic nominee, by a plurality of nearly 6,000. Mr. Robinson took the stump at once, and after a vigorous struggle overcame the large adverse majority, and was elected to the Forty-fifth Congress by a plurality of 2,162. He was successively re-elected, without serious opposition, to the Forty-sixth, Forty-seventh, and Forty-eighth Congresses. He brought to his new duties in Congress the trained habits of a student of political affairs, boldness in debate, ingenuity, resource, and a power of forcible and lucid statement, which soon commanded the attention of the House. Before the expiration of his first ses-

sion his close attention to the duties of his position both in the committee room and on the floor of the House made the late speaker Randall, a good judge of men, predict a distinguished future for the new member from Massachusetts. During his Congressional service he was given various important committee assignments, including places on the Judiciary Committee and on the Committee upon the Improvement of the Mississippi River. Mr. Robinson was regular in attendance upon the sessions of the House, and devoted his whole strength to the public business. During the second session of the Forty-fifth Congress he began to participate actively in the Congressional debates. As a debater, he was distinguished by incisiveness of speech and precision of statement,—qualities which made him a formidable antagonist. His familiarity with the rules also made him an authority in questions of parliamentary procedure, and he was frequently called to preside over a Democratic House.

In the fall of 1882 Mr. Robinson was elected for a fourth term, this time as the representative from the then new Twelfth District. His place in Congress was now an influential one; and he had come to be recognized as one of the leaders of the New England delegation and one of the strong men of the House. Back of him was a united and admiring constituency. His Congressional career seemed likely to be a long and eminent one; but it was suddenly terminated by the unanimous demand of his party to lead them in the fiercest campaign they had ever been called upon to make for victory in the State of Massachusetts.

In 1882 General Butler, supported by the whole Democratic party, and by a considerable number of Republicans, who constituted his personal following, had carried the State, and been elected Governor. His administration, by the course he chose to follow, had aroused deep resentments, and to the intense desire of the Republicans to regain the State as a party was added a great deal of personal bitterness.

The Republican organization therefore began its work early, for there was much to do. But the all-important point to be decided was who should be the candidate to lead the fight against General Butler. It was neither an easy nor an inviting task, and the prospect of victory was anything but certain.

It was my fortune to be at that time chairman of the Republican State Committee, and in charge of the campaign. I had no personal acquaintance with Governor Robinson, and knew him only by reputation as a distinguished and leading member of Congress. It seemed to me, however, at the very start, on looking over the whole field, that he would be our strongest candidate against General Butler; but I felt that, in view of the serious contest before us, the candidate should be selected by the well-considered opinion of the party, and that it was not the time for any interference in regard to the nomination by the State Committee. I was, therefore, very careful to say nothing whatever as to my own views as to candidates. As time went on, several distinguished Republicans were suggested for the nomination; but in each case a refusal to run fol-



lowed. Finally, party opinion settled down on Mr. Henry L. Pierce; and, as the date fixed for the convention approached, it was clear that he would be nominated with practical unanimity. That this would be the result of the convention was generally understood, and was accepted on all sides.

On the day before the convention Mr. Pierce sent for me, and told me that he could not be a candidate. His sudden withdrawal at the last moment was a very serious matter, when the all-important question of the nomination was thought to have been conclusively settled. It threatened to throw everything into confusion, and start us most unfortunately in the severe struggle which we knew was at hand. I remember very well the consternation of every one when I went back to the rooms of the State Committee, and stated officially that Mr. Pierce had finally withdrawn. I felt anxious myself, but not so much disturbed as the others; for I knew Governor Robinson was coming to town, and I meant to appeal to him to step into the gap and take the nomination. I met him that day at the office of his brother, Charles Robinson, in the Rogers Building. Our interview is one of the incidents of my life which I most vividly remember. After we had shaken hands, I said to him, "Mr. Robinson, Mr. Pierce has withdrawn, and you must take the nomination." He looked at me with his head up in the confident manner so characteristic of him, and with which I became afterward so familiar, and said, "Mr. Lodge, I have not sought the governorship; but, if the party

wants me and needs me, I will stand." I shall never forget the relief which I felt, and the confidence with which his answer, coming as it did in the midst of refusals and hesitations, inspired me.

He was nominated the next day, practically without opposition; and his short speech of acceptance gave to the convention the same feeling of confidence which he had already given to me. When he looked the delegates, as he did every one, squarely in the face, and said, "It is your duty to command: I count it mine to obey," a sense of relief filled the convention. After the days of doubt, hesitation, and alarm the strong man, the man able and willing to lead, had come; and every one recognized it. As we walked away together after the convention, he said to me: "We have a hard fight before us, and you and I are to be thrown together very closely. I want you to be perfectly frank with me about everything, and to call upon me unhesitatingly for all I can do. I am a poor man, and have no money to put into the campaign; but my time and strength are at the service of the party." Every one knows how he kept his word; but no one can appreciate it, I think, quite so fully as I do. The relations between the chairman of a State committee and his candidate are not always very easy. The chairman, working for party victory, is obliged to press the candidate pretty hard, and sometimes almost unreasonably; but in that campaign the candidate met every demand upon him, not only willingly, but gladly.

Governor Robinson shrank from no effort and no



fatigue. He made during the campaign, as I remember, some seventy-three speeches. I think he made nine on the last day; and he never failed in the force, variety, and freshness of what he said. With the exception of the Lincoln and Douglas debate, I do not believe that Governor Robinson's campaign against General Butler has ever been surpassed in a debate before the people. It was a close, hard fight; and I have never questioned that it was his commanding leadership which turned the scale. He never lost his temper, his good sense never failed. He followed his antagonist relentlessly, and without a syllable of personal abuse struck blow after blow, and never left an argument unanswered or a position unassailed. The confidence and enthusiasm which he inspired grew and strengthened with each day and with every speech; and, when it was all over and the polls had closed, he received the news of his victory with the same calm cheerfulness with which he had faced the heady currents of the fight.

After his brilliant and successful campaign for the governorship, he went to Washington in December, 1883, to participate in the organization of the Forty-eighth Congress, to which he had been elected the year before. On the 2d of January following he forwarded his resignation of his seat in Congress to Governor Butler. The Governor's reply was characteristic: "Your resignation of your office of representative in the Forty-eighth Congress of the United States from the Twelfth District of Massachusetts, tendered to the

Governor of the Commonwealth this morning, is hereby accepted, the reason prompting the same being so entirely satisfactory to a majority of the people of the State."

Thus he passed from the parliamentary field, for which he was so peculiarly fitted, and where he had won so much success, to the high executive office of Governor of Massachusetts. He was twice re-elected without really serious opposition, and was never in danger of defeat. To the important business of administration he brought the same diligence, ability, thoroughness, and conscientious work which had marked his whole career. He was an extremely successful governor. He had entire courage, and never hesitated to stop a measure with his veto if he thought it wrong, no matter how strong the popular feeling in its favor appeared to be. He devoted to the endless details of executive business the same attention, thought, and ability which he used to give to an exciting debate in the national House, when he was speaking and voting with the eyes of the country upon him. He came up to the high standard which the State demands of her governors, and at the close of his last term he commanded the approval of all the people to a degree which is rarely witnessed. The State was proud of him, the people admired him; but the feeling which he inspired above all others was complete confidence in his ability, courage, and strength.

When he left the governorship, he returned to private life and to the practice of his profession. He liked the work of public life, as every strong man likes to do that

which he knows he does well; but Governor Robinson felt that his duty to his family required him to abandon politics, although he might have had anything the State could give, and address himself to labors which would make provision for the future and for those dearest to him. There were no repinings and no rejoicings. He went out of public life, leaving behind him all its attraction and all its drawbacks, with the same philosophic cheerfulness with which he had accepted his first nomination for governor and heard the news of his great victory flashed over the wires to Chicopee. Once out of politics, he cast no backward looks, but gave his whole strength to his profession, although he would always come forward in the campaigns and help his party with a speech, when the fight was hottest and his aid most needed.

Of his success at the bar after his return to it there is no need to speak. It is still fresh in every one's mind. Thus busily engaged, nine years went by; and then he was suddenly stricken down. He was so strong, so temperate, so vigorous in all ways, that the idea of illness seemed utterly remote from him. We all, I think, regarded him as the man, above all others, who was destined to a long life and to a strong old age, surpassing even that of his long-lived ancestry. Death is the commonest of events; but it is always a surprise, and in his case the shock was especially sudden and severe. The blow was instant and decisive, like the strong man who fell beneath it; but it was none the less hard to bear for the people of this Commonwealth,

who had looked up to him, followed him, honored him. Still in his prime, in the vigor of his manhood, he had been reft from us; and the people of Massachusetts mourned beside his grave.

So the story of the life and the career ends with the sad ending of all our little human histories. It seems to me a very fine story, even when told as imperfectly and incompletely as I have told it to you. It is not only a life which it will be a pride to his children to recall, but it is full of meaning and encouragement to us all. The character and qualities of the man himself seem to me to shine out very brightly through the brief abstract and chronicle of what he did in this busy world. They are worth considering by all men who love Massachusetts, and who are inspired with eager, earnest hopes for the destiny of their country and their race.

Note, first, that he was a strong man physically, big, deep-chested, able to withstand toil and stress. This is a point which is too often overlooked; and yet it is of grave importance, for the puny races of men go to the wall. Governor Robinson was a fine proof of the fact that the hardy Englishmen who settled here had not degenerated, but rather had waxed stronger in bone and muscle and sinews in their two hundred and fifty years of American life. Mind and character matched the physical attributes. Strength of will and vigor of mind were his two most characteristic qualities. He was exceedingly temperate in all ways, a man of pure, clean, wholesome life. The desires of

the senses were under as much control as his temper. He was always cool, and his judgment was never clouded by excitement. The stern spirit of self-sacrifice to a great purpose, which brought the Puritans to the wilderness, survived in him, mellowed no doubt, but just as effective as of old in the conditions of life which he was called to meet. He had deep convictions on all questions; but he was always just, tolerant, and fair. He was a hard worker, one who never shirked and never complained. Rarely have I met a man of such even cheerfulness under all circumstances. The words which Washington used about the Constitution often came to my mind when I watched Governor Robinson's method of dealing with public affairs: "We have set up a standard to which the good and wise may repair: the event is in the hands of God." He did his best always, and never worried before nor repined after the event, if things went ill, nor rejoiced unduly, if they went well.

He made his greatest reputation as a debater in Congress and before the people. He was not a rhetorician, and never tried to be. When Antony says,

"I am no orator, as Brutus is ;  
But, as you know me all, a plain, blunt man,  
That love my friend.  
I only speak right on,"

we recognize the artistic self-depreciation of the most consummate orator who ever lived, if he spoke as Shakspeare makes him speak. But what Antony said

for effect might be said with truth of Governor Robinson. He was the plain, blunt man who spoke right on ; and he was a master of this most difficult and telling kind of oratory. He was no phrase-maker, no rounder of periods, no seeker for metaphors ; but he was one of the most effective and convincing speakers, whether to Congress, to a great popular audience, or to a jury, that I ever listened to. The very way in which he faced an audience, with his head up, and that bold, confident, but never arrogant manner, calmed the most hostile and roused the most indifferent. He used simple language and clear sentences. He had a remarkable power of nervous, lucid statement,—a very great gift. His arguments were keen and well knit, and illumined by a strong sense of humor and a dry wit which was very delightful. He had, above all, the rare and most precious faculty of making his hearers feel that he was putting into words just what they had always thought, but had never been able to express quite so well. To do this is very difficult. It does not come merely by nature. The most famous poet of Queen Anne's day thought it a very great art ; for he tells us that,

“ True wit is nature to advantage dressed,  
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.”

Governor Robinson was, in one word, a great debater, —one of the greatest and best of his generation ; and, when I say this, it implies that he was a man of unusual powers of thought, incisive, quick, and of great mental resource.



But his remarkable ability as a speaker, his shrewdness and justice and diligence in all the affairs of life, his calm temper and his cheerful philosophy, while they were all potent factors in his success and his popularity, were not his only nor his highest qualities. It is a very happy thing to be popular and successful; but it is a much nobler thing to command the affectionate and deep confidence, not only of friends, but of a great community. This Governor Robinson did in a high degree, and the secret lay in his character. People trusted him, not because he was a brilliant and convincing speaker, of whom they were proud, or even because he was a faithful and admirable chief magistrate, but because they knew him to be an entirely honest and fearless man. They saw that he was simple in his life, thoroughly democratic, educated, and trained, with a mind open to new ideas, and yet with the ingrained conservatism and the reverence for law and order which New England has always cherished; and, therefore, they believed in him. Instinctively, the people turned to him as the strong man fit for leadership and command, who would never waver in the face of danger and never betray a trust.

Is not our question as to the result of the Puritan civilization answered by such a life and such a character? The old qualities are all there, the old fighting qualities, and ever with them the mastering sense of duty to God, to country, and to family. They have not weakened in the centuries that have come and gone. They have broadened, but they have not pined or faded.

They have not been refined and cultivated to nothingness; and, when you strike down and call upon the yeomanry of Massachusetts, you find a man like this to stand forward, when the State needs him. They tell us sometimes that our people are too much like the granite of our hills. So be it. Strength and endurance, offering an unchanging face to storm and sunshine alike, are the qualities of granite and the foundations also on which a race can build a great present and a mighty future. But let it not be forgotten that, if the outside of the granite cliff is somewhat stern and gray, when you pierce its heart, you find running across it the rich warm veins of color gathered there through dim ages in which contending forces moulded the earth forms we now see about us. Again, I say we have done well to meet together in memory of such a man. He has earned our praise and our gratitude, not only for what he did and for the high titles he wore so well, but for what he was. In his life he was respected, honored, loved, and trusted. At his death the State, over which he had once been set, bowed her head in grief. But across the darkness of the sorrow comes the light which such a life sheds; for we may take to our hearts the lesson it brings,—that all is well with state and country while they breed such men as this.

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The audience having joined in singing "America," the Rev. Charles F. Carter brought the proceedings to a close by pronouncing the benediction.









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